

NEWS AND GOSSIP OF LONDON STAGE

Reinhardt's "A Venetian Night," Limit of Daring

STRAUSS' NEW OPERA

Somerset Maugham to Visit Canada to Secure Material for New Play.
Bourchier to Retire From Stage—Barrie Is Active

By MALCOLM WATSON

London, November 23.—(Special).—The chief subject of discussion—particularly in theatrical circles—during the week has been the lord chamberlain's refusal to sanction Max Reinhardt's production of "A Venetian Night" at the palace in its original form. The news came like a thunderbolt upon everyone and not least upon the manager of the Palace, Alfred Butt. Lord Sandhurst's decision was based upon the report of one of his representatives, a very fair-minded man, who certainly cannot be accused either of prejudice or of holding puritanical views. He attended a dress rehearsal on Sunday night, but, naturally, gave no hint of what his opinion really was, merely suggesting one or two slight modifications in the matter of certain costumes and dances. Evidently, however, he was very unfavorably impressed by what he witnessed and if the verdict of a friend of mine who also attended the rehearsal and in whose judgment I have every confidence can be trusted, I am scarcely surprised.

Sometime ago I read a synopsis of the story and I am bound to admit it struck me as possessing several rather risky passages. Manifestly, everything depends on how a situation is handled on the stage—it only requires a touch one way or the other on the part of the producer to create a disagreeable or an acceptable effect. There are some situations, the significance of which can never be concealed. But even in their case something can be accomplished to redeem their ugliness. From what I hear Reinhardt had done little in this direction, and the condemnation of "A Venetian Night" followed as a matter of course.

Tree Still Holidaying

Beerholm Tree is still holiday-making on the continent and after his usual irresponsible fashion does not bother to let anybody know what his movements are. I hear, however, that he was seen the other day in Venice. As likely as not he has made his way southward in order to spend a day or two with his daughter, Viola, who, shortly after her marriage, returned to Italy in order to continue her musical studies. The last official news of his whereabouts came from Trieste himself, then in Vienna. A correspondent of a London newspaper telegraphed over that the popular actor-manager had traveled thither to discuss with Richard Strauss the possibility of amalgamating his new opera, "Ariadne," based on Moliere's "Bourgeois Gentilhomme," with Somerset Maugham's adaptation of that piece. I can imagine Strauss' look if Tree was really sufficiently daring to propose the cutting about of Strauss' score in order to bring it into line with Maugham's version. No, I am certain that Tree is far too shrewd to suggest such a thing. If he discussed anything with Strauss it would be the question of producing "Ariadne" at His Majesty's in the present shape it was originally given at Stuttgart.

Apocryphal of Somerset Maugham, he sails for New York in the course of a week or two. I mentioned some little time ago that, despite his announced intention of concentrating his attention upon novel-writing, he was secretly at work upon a new play. It is designed for Charles Hawtreay and Charles Frohman will presumably have the American rights. Late in Somerset Maugham has been turning over in his mind the idea of writing a piece dealing with life and character in Canada. It is more than probable, consequently, that while on your side he will visit the Dominion for the purpose of obtaining material for such a work.

Hawtreay at West End

Reference to Charles Hawtreay reminds me that he is to resume West End management early in January. As at present arranged he will do so at the Apollo. I say "at present" because a couple of days ago the lease of that house, Tom G. Hannay, cannot of St. Paul's cathedral, Dublin. At the last moment Hawtreay tells me that, having reasoned with Davis over a good dinner, the latter went as far as to admit that after all he might be wrong on the subject of the play. As stated above Hawtreay will follow "General John Regan," as Birmingham's piece is tentatively entitled, with Somerset Maugham's new comedy, and that again will be succeeded by a piece by Stanley Houghton, author of "Hindle Wakes" and "The Younger Generation." This latter, I understand, has been secured for America by the Shuberts.

Charles Klein's drama, "Find the Women," has only about a month more to run at the Garrick. Upon its withdrawal Arthur Bourchier intends to give himself a little holiday, and to enable him to do so he has leased the theatre to Hawtreay, who will revive there that delightful children's play, "Where the Rainbow Ends," which proved so successful last year as a Christmas entertainment. He tells me that another five years will see him out of it. Between then and now he counts upon securing two or three really big successes, such as he had with "The Walls of Jericho." Should he persist in his intention he will retire from the stage still a comparatively young man. The glare of the footlights has, however, a fascination for anyone who has ever stood behind them and Bourchier will, doubtless, when the period stipulated by him is over, find it difficult to resist their influence.

Smith Presents "Instinct"

This week Aubrey Smith has given us at the Duke of York's the new play, "Instinct." After the curtain fell I went round to have a chat and found him in the highest spirits and extremely hopeful of a prosperous run. How far his expectations will be justified by events remains to be seen. He is confident, however, that he will make a lot of money in the United States with the piece. One obvious drawback it has, namely, that it plays into only an hour and a half, including waits, which, of course, is much too short an interval to fill out an evening's entertainment. To help matters, Stanlaus has cabled over that he is mailing another scene which may possibly add 10 minutes to the duration of the performance. The piece was very well acted by Smith himself and Lillian Braithwaite in the principal parts. It is somewhat, nevertheless, of the machine-made order of things and thoroughly to enjoy it you

must have a good deal of the spirit of make-believe in your composition.

The other night I repaired to Sarah Bernhard's dressing room to say goodbye to the famous French actress. She was in splendid form and received me in the most animated fashion. She repeated with fresh emphasis her keen delight at the prospect of crossing the Atlantic once more and the immense satisfaction with which she looked forward to getting into touch with your public again.

In a fortnight from now we are to have a new playlet from J. M. Barrie. It contains three scenes and is to be done at the London Hippodrome. From the same writer Granville Barker has secured a one-act piece which he hopes to produce at no very distant date. Oswald Stoll, too, has secured "Rosallind" for the variety stage. It will be transferred to the Coliseum after the termination of its run at the Duke of York's.

WHY WOMEN LIVE LONGER

Brain Cells and Difference Between Home and Shop or Office

From the London Daily Mail.

Though doctors have long realized that, thanks to a better knowledge of sanitation and personal hygiene, people are living longer than formerly, the much greater relative longevity of women as shown in the recently published national debt officer's report on the mortality of government life annuitants has come as a general surprise.

In a summary of these figures it was shown that the expectation of life of a woman of 50 is now more than a year greater than it was in 1875, while that of a man of the same age is only three months greater.

Discussing the reasons of our increasing longevity and in particular woman's stronger hold on life, physicians at St. Bartholomew's hospital advanced widely different theories. "The essential cause of death," one stated, "is a wearing out from overwork of our brain cells. Women may be just as brainy as men, but they do not work their brain cells as vigorously or as continuously as do their male relatives. If they did there would not be so great a disparity in the length of life of the two sexes."

Another consultant puts down woman's greater expectation of life to the more sheltered existence she leads and the lack of the physically depressing competition which is part of nearly every man's life. "A woman may have hard work to do," he explained, "but except for the few who work in offices or who follow professions they work in their own homes and at a pace they set for themselves. The home is also a rule vastly more airy, sunny and generally more wholesome than in her husband's shop or office."

Educating the Sight

From Harper's Weekly.

The education of the senses in general and of the sight in particular, has a tendency to become overlooked by civilized man, who no longer has to rely chiefly upon his physical alertness for protection or sustenance. Its

importance in the training of children is becoming more and more widely recognized, however. Psychologists dwell upon the facts that most people cannot measure accurately by the eye even the length of a straight line, that an estimate of weight has always to be corrected by scales, and that only one accustomed to much open air life can give even an approximately correct idea of the height at which a bird may be flying. It is noted that even the birds learn, with the perfection of firearms, to fly higher than the range of the shot. This precise degree of accurate measurement civilized man cannot make by any method yet devised. In certain schools children are being taught to estimate weight "by sight," but with little real success. Pupils in a western school were taken daily, a year or two ago, upon walks, the entire length of which was spiced with iron rods placed at varying distances apart, and the pupils' task was assigned to reckon—by the eye—first one distance between two spikes and then another. Though prizes were given to stimulate the exercise, it was, and continued for a long time to be, far from satisfactory. A similar test given in a school upon an Indian reservation showed amazing results in favor of the Indian boy.

Sweet Times at Birdsong

Birdsong Correspondence St. Clair County Democrat.

The sorghum mills are running early and late these good days. The quality is of the highest grade. Its

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